

Yoopera! screening at Suomi Talo
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Finlandia Foundations Lecturer of the Year 2014

Sincere thanks to Finlandia Foundation National and Suomi Talo in Lantana, Florida for bringing the documentary film, "Yoopera!" to the beautiful sunshine state. As part of the "Lecturer of the Year" program, I am able to present and screen the film to people who may not otherwise have the opportunity to see it and to have discussions around the many themes of the film.

"Yoopera!" is a one hour documentary film about the New World premier of Jukka Linkola's opera Rockland and Mary Wright's Storyline Project, a public art project done in conjunction with the opera. The Storyline Project engaged people to research their own histories and tell the stories of their ancestors' struggles. Since 30 % of the people of the Keweenaw are of Finnish descent, the tie between the opera's libretto of the murder of two Finnish immigrant miners in 1906 and the Storyline Project was a natural means to explore the idea of how cultural heritage is transformed into community art and performance in a documentary film.

The Suomi Talo event included a quick introduction of the film, the screening of Yoopera! and question and answers about the film. Candace Janners, the head of the Rockland task force for the Pine Mountain Music Festival, and Dr. Sig Janners, board member of Pine Mountain Music Festival, spoke about the process and creation of the opera, the Old World Premiere in Nivala, Finland and the New World Premiere in Houghton.

So much of filmmaking is done in isolation either at the computer writing in solitude or editing in a dark room. Thank you to all in attendance who sparked a great conversation about the artful spirit of the film, the incredible music, the labor movement in the United States and the cultural ties and personality differences between the descendants of Finnish people in the United States and Finns living in Finland.